(2) Amended Claims

1. (Currently amended)   A process for preparation of aerated, gelatin-containing confections comprising: (a) heating a mixture of mono, di and oligosaccharides in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture and obtain a concentrated sugar solution; (b) cooling the concentrated sugar solution; (c) separately mixing dry sucrose and dry gelatin to form a dry blend, wherein the dry gelatin and dry sucrose have similar particle sizes of less than 8 mesh; (d) hydrating the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin to form a slurry of essentially completely hydrated gelatin in a sucrose solution; (e) heating the slurry sufficiently to dissolve the gelatin and form an aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin; (f) admixing the aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin with concentrated sugar solution to prepare a confection composition; and (g) aerating the confection composition, wherein the processing is effective to cause less *trans*-to-*cis* isomerization in the gelatin than would occur in prior art processing wherein gelatin and sucrose are mixed after forming solutions of each.

2. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the concentrated sugar solution has a solids content of at least 75% by weight.

3. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the water for hydrating the gelatin is added at a temperature of less than about 40°C and the hold time is at least about 10 minutes.

4. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the gelatin and sucrose solution is heated to a temperature of up to about 75°C.

5. (Currently amended)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 8 mesh.

6. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 5 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

7. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 6 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of about 40 mesh or less.

8. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the dry gelatin and dry sucrose are granulated to about the same particle sizes.

9. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 8 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

10. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the mixture comprising mono, di and oligosaccharides was heated in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture to obtain a concentrated sugar solution having solids content of at least 75% by weight.

11. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 10 wherein the mixture is heated to obtain a concentrated sugar solution having solids content of from 80% to 85% by weight.

12. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the slurry is heated to a temperature of at least 65°F. and maintained at that temperature, prior to subsequent processing.

13. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the concentrated sugar solution is cooled to a temperature of less than 80°C by the addition of water or an aqueous sucrose solution.

14. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 1 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 3:1 to about 25:1.

15. (Originally presented)   A process according to claim 11 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1.

16. (Currently amended)   A dry blend of sugar and gelatin, suitable for processing by a process entailing: (a) heating a mixture of mono, di and oligosaccharides in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture and obtain a concentrated sugar solution; (b) cooling the concentrated sugar solution; (c) separately mixing dry sucrose and dry gelatin to form the dry blend; (d) hydrating the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin to form a slurry of essentially completely hydrated gelatin in a sucrose solution; (e) heating the slurry sufficiently to dissolve the gelatin and form an aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin; (f) admixing the aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin with concentrated sugar solution to prepare a confection composition; and (g) aerating the confection composition; the processing being effective to cause less *trans*-to-*cis* isomerization in the gelatin than would occur in prior art processing wherein gelatin and sucrose are mixed after forming solutions of each ~~comprising~~ . the dry blend consisting essentially of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1, wherein the sucrose and gelatin have about the same particle sizes of less than 8 mesh.

17. (Currently amended)   A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein ~~the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1~~ gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 10 mesh.

18. (Currently amended)   A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein ~~the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of~~

from about 4:1 to about 20:1 and the gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

19. (Currently amended)   A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein the ~~sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1 and the~~ gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of 40 mesh or less.

20. (Currently amended)   A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein the ~~sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1 and the~~ sucrose and gelatin are both granulated to a particle size of less than 40 mesh.